

Good Ideas: An Addendum to the Puffers Pond 2020 Committee Final Report to the Amherst Conservation Commission and other Town Committees

The following are some other items discussed but not voted on by the Committee, but which had a significant level of support among committee members. The Conservation Commission and Town may want to consider them as the process moves forward.

- **The role of the public:** The Committee encourages continued engagement of and outreach to the public to gain and maintain support for the Pond and Town actions for the Pond and Greenway.
- **Town Pools:** There is an apparent connection between the availability of swimming at Town pools and use (or overuse) of the Pond. The Committee encourages the Town to keep municipal pools open to reduce the use at Puffers.
- **Funding:** Long-term funding is essential to the Pond and the Greenway's continued health. Options beyond the parking fee that we discussed include:
 - The Committee believes the Conservation Department or Town Manager should engage in conversation with UMass as well as Amherst College about their contributing to the pond. The Pond and the town's other conservation areas are used by students in spring and fall. Both these institutions market quality of life in Amherst as a key draw for students, and the Pond and the other conservation areas are important contributors to local quality of life.
 - Other possibilities for future funding include generating electricity from micro-hydro (the water flowing over the dam), grant writing, and funds from the Town's capital expenses priority list.
- **Public Education:** The Committee discussed that protecting the Pond and encouraging responsible behavior will be more likely if there are public education efforts to encourage the public to appreciate the fragile balance between conservation and recreation. Such efforts could include:
 - Educational signage that describes natural features and the fragility of the natural resources in the face of overuse.
 - Town programs that might include Puffers Pond Appreciation Day, LSSE day camp, school curriculum and expansion of the mandate of Friends of Puffers Pond
 - Annual "Puffers Pond Hero" award
- **Swimming Holes along the Mill River:** The Committee considered whether to increase visual and physical access to the swimming holes along the Mill River located upstream from the Pond, as a way to balance out overuse of the Pond itself. No particular conclusion was reached on this issue, but it is worth future consideration since the whole area works as an ecological as well as recreational system.